

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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DIA WASHDC

CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER

USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 7294

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MILI, PINS, PINT, LE

SUBJECT: LEBANESE SITUATION SEPTEMBER 5-6

REF: BEIRUT 7283

1. SUMMARY: ALL EYES ON SARKIS AS KFOUR SOURCE SAYS
PRESIDENT-ELECT TO TAKE OFFICE SEPTEMBER 23 WITH REQUISITE
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PARLIAMENTARY MEETING FOLLOWING THAT DATE. POLITICAL AND

RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONTINUE THE TREK TO DAMASCUS. CHRISTIANS HOLD DISCUSSIONS WITH FATAH SECURITY CHIEF AMID RUMORS ARAFAT MAY MEET LEADERS OF KFOUR FRONT. MOURABITOUN DENIES SEP 5 CLASH WITH ARAB LEAGUE FORCES. LAA'S LT. AHMAD KHATIB COMPLAINS OF TREATMENT BY NATIONAL MOVEMENT. CONSERVATIVE FACTIONS IN NORTH FORM NATIONAL FRONT. ON THE GROUND, THERE IS HEAVY SHELLING IN MANY AREAS BUT LITTLE GROUND MOVEMENT AND NO MAJOR BATTLES. END SUMMARY.

2. SARKPUMM ACCORDING TO L'ORIENT, SOURCES CLOSE TO KFOUR SAY SARKIS TO BE INVESTED AT ZOUK MUNICIPAL PALACE SEPT 23 WITH R
LRVITE PARLIAMENTARY MEETING HELD AT VILLA MANSOUR NEAR NATIONAL MUSEUM AFTER THAT DATE. SOURCE SAYS ANTOINE BAROUD, PRESIDENT OF COUNCIL OF STATE, HAS TOLD FRANGIE IT NOT NECESSARY SARKIS BE INVESTED SAME DAY DEPUTIES MEET. MAROUD BASES STATEMENT ON 1936 PRECEDENT IN WHICH EMILE EDDE TOOK OFFICE BEFORE TAKING OATH.

3. THE SYRIAN CONNECTION. LOCAL PRESS REPORTS "GREAT SYRIAN SUCCESS" AT AL FONMIN MEETING IN CAIRO AS SYRIA GAINS TIME TO COMPLETE "PEACE" MISSION IN LEBANON. AL'S HASSAN SABRI KHOLI EXPECTED IN BEIRUT WITHIN 48 HOURS VIA DAMASCUS FOR BRIEFING ON SYRIAN INITIATIVE IN LEBANON AND DISCUSSIONS ON UPCOMING ARAB SUMMIT. PILGRIMAGE TO DAMASCUS OF LEBANESE POLITICAL AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS CONTINUES. MUFTI OF REPUBLIC HASSAN KHALID MET ASSAD SEP 5. DISCUSSIONS SAID TO REVOLVE AROUND: 1) SYRIAN RELATIONS WITH KFOUR FRONT; 2) SYRWAN POSITION ON FEBRUARY 14 "CONSTITUTION DOCUMENT;" 3) SYRIAN RELATIONS WITH PALESTINIANS AND LEFTISTS; AND, 4) CONDITIONS FOR RETREAT OF SYRIAN TROOPS. MUFTI HAD MET NASSERIST LEADER QLAYLAT BEFORE DEPARTURE AND WAS ACCOMPANIED BY IZZAT HARB, MEMBER OF JUNBLATT'S CENTRAL POLITICAL COUNCIL, WHICH HAS LED TO SPECULATION THAT MUFTI SEEKING PROMOTE JUNBLATT-SYRIAN DIALOGUE. GROUP OF RIGHTIST DEPUTIES NOW IN DAMASCUS. PIERRE GEMAYEL TO MEET WITH ASSAD SEP 6. GEMAYEL LAST VISITED DAMASCUS IN DEC 75. BEFORE LEAVING
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FOR SYRIA, GEMAYEL REITERATED HIS POSITION THAT PARTITION NOT BEING IMPOSED BY CHRISTIANS AND AREAS OCCUPIED BY PALESTINIANS MUST BE RESTORED TO LEBANESE CONTROL TO PERMIT LEBANESE TO REUNITE. FATAH REPRESENTATIVES ABU MAZEN AND ABU MAHER RETURNED FROM DAMASCUS TO BEIRUT SEP 5 PRESUMABLY TO BRIEF PLO LEADERSHIP ON CURRENT SYRIAN-LEBANESE CONTACTS.

4. CHRISTIANS AND PALESTINIANS INTENSIFY CONTACTS. FATAH CHIEF OF SECURITY ALI HASSAN SALAMAH (ABU HASSAN) ESCORTED BY PHALANGE LEADERS ALEXANDER GEMAYEL AND JOSEPH ABU SHARAF MET IN EAST BEIRUT SEPT 4 WITH SARKIS, PIERRE GEMAYEL, GREEK-ORTHODOX LEADER GOFRIL SALIBI AND MARONITE PATRIARCH KHOREICH. KHOREICHE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION ON "POSITIVE RESULTS" OF MEETING. GEMAYEL, ACCORDING TO AN NAHAR, REITERATED POSITION THAT FIRST STEP IN ENDING WAR MUST BE PALESTINIAN WITHDRAWAL FROM MOUNTAIN POSITIONS AND ASKED THAT A FIRST STEP BE TAKEN BEFORE HIS SEP 6 VISIT TO DAMASCUS. ABU HASSAN REPORTEDLY TOLD GEMAYEL THAT PLO IS ABOUT TO ADOPT "IMPORTANT RESOLUTIONS" WHICH WILL LEAD TO END OF WAR. THERE ARE RUMORS ARAFAT MAY MEET LEADERS OF KFOUR FRONT IN NEXT FEW DAYS. QUESTION REMAINS SAFE MEETING SITE. ABU IYAD, IN AN NAHAR INTERVIEW, STRESSED PLO WILLINGNESS RETURN TO CAIRO ACCORDS, AS AMENDED, AND ASKED PAPER TO PUBLISH FULL TEXT OF AGREEMENT, TO REFUTE RECENT FRANGIE ACCUSATIONS.

5. MOURABITOUN VS. ARAB LEAGUE. MOURABITOUN LEADERS DENY CLASH WITH AL FORCES IN NATIONAL MUSEUM AREA SEPT 5. VOICE OF LEBANON (KATAEB), WHICH MADE CHARGE, SAYS MOURABITOUN WERE SEEKING TO EXTEND CONTROL IN AO BUFFER ZONE. AL MILITARY COMMANDER GHONEIM SAYS IN MONDAY MORNING INTERVIEW HIS TROOPS WILL FIRE ON ANY GROUP WHICH FIRES ON THEM, BUT AL PEACE FORCE "WILL NOT BECOME A FORCE OF INTERVENTION AS THAT WOULD MAKE IT A NEW PARTY TO THE CONFLICT."

6. LEFTIST IN-FIGHTING. LAA'S LT. AHMAD KHATIB IN AL-SAFIR INTERVIEW CHARGES NATIONAL MOVEMENT FORCES ATTACKED LAA BARRACKS AND CARRIED OFF ARMS AND
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AMMUNITION. KHATIB COMPLAINS NATIONAL MOVEMENT FAILS TO RECOGNIZE LAA AS "AN ARMY AND A MILITARY FORCE" AND ATTACKS CREATION OF LOCAL CIVIL ADMINISTRATION BY NATIONAL MOVEMENT AS "SIGNIFYING PARTITION."

7. NATIONAL FRONT OF THE NORTH. CONSERVATIVE FACTIONS IN TRIPOLI AREA HAVE ANNOUNCED "NATIONAL FRONT OF THE NORTH" TO UNIFY RIGHTISTS. FORMER DEPUTY FROM BECHARRE, KABALAN ISSA EL-KHOURY, NAMED PRESIDENT. SIMON BOULOS IS SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TONY FRANGIE HEAVY MILITARY OPERATIONS. EL-KHOURY AND BOULOS RECEIVED BY PRESIDENT FRANGIE SEP 5.

8. GROUND SITUATION. DESPITE INFLAMMATORY PRESS REPORTS, WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE OF REAL CHANGE IN MILITARY

SITUATION. ARTILLERY BARRAGES VERY HEAVY IN SEVERAL AREAS BUT THERE IS LITTLE GROUND MOVEMENT WITH TSPTION OF SMALL RAIDS AND POSITION CONSOLIDATION MANEUVERS. IN BEIRUT, CLASHES CONTINUE ALONG CENTER CITY CONFRONTATION LINE. LIMITED SHELLING OF RESIDENTIAL AREAS BY BOTH SIDES. SOUTHEAST SUBURBS OF CHIYAH AND AIN EL-RUMMANEH CONTINUE MUTUAL BOMBARDMENTS. IN THE MOUNTAINS, RAS EL-METN AREA APPEARS THE HOT POINT, THOUGH LIMITED CLASHES AND HEAVY SHELLING REPORTED FROM MANY AREAS. LIMITED CLASHES AND BOMBARDMENTS CONTINUE IN TRIPOLI AREA AND AL MOHARRER SAYS SYRIANTLO E STRENGTHENED POSITIONS AROUND PALESTINIAN CAMPS NORTH OF CITY. IN THE SOUTH, SYRIANS AT JEZZINE CONTINUE TO SHELL ROUM AND WE UNDERSTAND SYRIAN UNITS HAVE ADVANCED TO QILAYA SOUTHWEST OF RASHIYYAH. L'ORIENT ESTIMATES COUNTRYWIDE CASUALTIES SEP 5 154 KILLED AND 233 WOUNDED.

9. HOUGHTON/MACK MISSION. US DIPLOMATIC ENVOYS TO CHRISTIAN LEADERS DEPARTED JOUNIEH SEP 5 FOR WASHINGTON. LANE

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